

THE JEWISH DAILY

FORWARD

SHA'AR ZAHAV

שער זהב

אלול 5739

SEPT 1979

## high holy days

Evening services for Rosh Hashanah will be held at 8:00 p.m., Friday, September 21. Morning services will commence at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 22. There will be no services for the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

Evening services for Yom Kippur will be held at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 30. Morning services will commence at 10:00 a.m. Sunday, October 1. Yizkor (Memorial) and Ne'ilah (concluding) services will commence at 4:00 p.m. There will be no break between the Yizkor and Ne'ilah services. So as not to mar the mood, please plan to stay for both. All services will be held at the Jewish Community Center, 3200 California Street at Presidio, San Francisco.

Join us as we break the fast after Ne'ilah services.



# ritual committee

Although the High Holidays are a celebration of the birthday of the world, they are also a solemn occasion. They are the time at which God is thought to judge each of our lives and decide upon our fate for the coming year. This theme is evident particularly in the services for Yom Kippur, replete with allusions to our sins and our fate hanging on the balance of God's mercy.

Many of us have been alienated by the liturgy for these holidays. We resent having to recite, "We have committed murder" or "we have slandered" when we feel we have done no such thing. The idea that the unrepentant will actually be struck down seems archaic and contrary to our own experience. High Holiday services can be unsatisfying; we may have difficulty turning into the mood of the service.

The mood of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur can be influenced by what we do outside of our public worship. In fact, to really experience these holidays, there must be preparation for them. The period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is called the ten days of turning. Turning from the person we are to the person we would like to be-- is not accomplished instantly. It occurs over time and with effort. This, the ten intermediate days of the High Holidays are a time of introspection and reconciliation. Why not take advantage of this time to think about your life this past year: what were the positive aspects of it and the negative? In what ways have you changed? In what ways do you still have to change? Take stock not only of the things you would like to do differently next year, but of the positive aspects of your life the advances you have made. It is customary at this time also to settle longstanding grievances and ask for forgiveness of those you may have slighted during the year. This will leave you at peace with yourself and with those around you.

The above suggestions will probably not eliminate all your grievances about High Holiday liturgy. They may at least give the prayers you say a deeper meaning, and your High Holiday worship and added dimension.

L'Shana tovah tikatevu-- may you be inscribed for a good year!

Laurie Radovsky

Chairperson, Ritual Committee

## wanted

We at Sha'ar Zahav are in the process of growth and the expansion of services to our members. That's the good news. The bad news is that we are not in a position to sustain our own needs with our current level of income. Quite simply we are looking for donations of a few items to help us function better so that we can serve you better. If you can donate any of the following items, or can convince someone else to do so, you will be doing a tangible mitzvah: 1) A file cabinet, in 2-, 3-, or 4-drawer size, for synagogue office use; 2) a telephone answering machine, again for use by the synagogue; and 3) an IBM Hebrew Selectric typewriter. Remember, even if you can't donate it yourself, you can encourage such donations from those who can. And it is also possible for two or more to combine efforts to be able to do so. We look for your help.

## reminder

Just a reminder, if you have recently moved or, more importantly, are planning to move, please send a change of address card to our Congregation at P. O. Box 5640, San Francisco, CA 94101 right away. Otherwise, it costs us 25¢ to get your change of address from the Post Office.



# from where i stand

The High Holy Days are rapidly approaching, and with their arrival will come our annual time of soul-searching and personal stock-taking. For many of us this time was formerly a time during which we were confronted by our rabbis on a variety of subjects. Most of those subjects were intended to produce enough guilt that we would "become better Jews", which meant that we would become better synagogue supporters, (whatever that meant!).

I agree with my colleagues who suggest that we should settle accounts with each other and with God at this time of year. But I would suggest that we approach the process a little differently. Instead of feeling guilty about what has transpired in the past, why not try to determine our own best growing edges and, setting realistic goals and reasonable aims, strive to accomplish things which we can do.

No one will ask you to be perfect. If you were, we'd be praying to you instead of to God! Instead we ask you to be as perfect as you can within the limitations of your own humanity, and to work with the rest of us in making a commitment to Sha'ar Zahav which is both realistic and rewarding for you.

I, as the rabbi of this congregation, am only too well aware of the variety of interests that are present among us, and which are sometimes in conflict. Yet it is one of my responsibilities to help steer us through various spiritual straits. As you know, I can only do that with your willing consent and assistance. I, for one, believe that Sha'ar Zahav is worth all we put into it, and I reaffirm my commitment to it and to you, its members and friends, as the New Year approaches. I invite you to reassess your commitment to Sha'ar Zahav at this time, as the year 5740 approaches, and to move us up on your priority list for the coming year.

L'SHANAH TOVA TIKATEIVU! MAY YOU BE INSCRIBED  
IN THE BOOK OF LIFE FOR A GOOD YEAR!

# off the (eastern) wall

It's appropriate, at the end of 5739, for me to extend my sincere thanks to those members and friends of Sha'ar Zahav who have worked so hard on our various activities and projects throughout the year. Let's all resolve individually and collectively, to increase our efforts in the coming year to help Sha'ar Zahav to develop into the type of community we would like.

On behalf of the officers and the Va'ad, I'd like to wish all our readers a healthful, peaceful and productive New Year.

L'Shana Tovah  
Daniel Chesir

Great Outdoor Adventures invites you to attend a weekend camping trip to Orr's Hot Springs, near Ukiah. Carpools will be arranged by Aryae Levy. Contact him for information. Orr's Hot Springs has a 8 foot communal hot tub, an outdoor pool built into rocks, and a large swimming pool fed by natural springs. Clothing optional. All meals are included, The dates are September 28 to the 30th. Back in time for Yom Kippur services. Sleep in the campground or the sleeping loft. Cabins are available at extra cost. The trip is opened first to Sha'ar Zahav members. The cost is \$50.00 to our members.

For more information contact Aryae at Great Outdoor Adventures, 47 Valley Street, San Francisco. Telephone: (415) 826-8857



## education committee

The education committee is pleased to announce that two classes will be offered this fall. They are "Prayer Book Hebrew," an ongoing class, taught by Haim Gamburg, and a "liturgical workshop" taught by Rabbi Bennett.

Haim, who was born in Netanya, Israel, is in San Francisco for one year while on Sabbatical. He has extensive experience as a college professor of both Hebrew and Russian. His course is designed to offer the basics of liturgical Hebrew, to enable students better to understand the prayers in our service. Haim is also willing to teach a conversational Hebrew class for those interested in modern Hebrew. If your interest lies in Modern Hebrew, attend the first class and a second course will be formed. The first class will take place in my home, 4355-18th Street on Tuesday, September 18, from 7:00 to 9:00p.m.

Allen will be leading the liturgical workshop on Saturday, October 13th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Bring your own sack lunch. The workshop will focus on how to lead services using our liturgy and will sidelight public speaking techniques. The workshop is intended especially for individuals who are interested in leading services in the future, but will be beneficial also for those presently leading services. It will be offered at 1650 Page street, and, if enough interest is demonstrated, it will be repeated in 1980.

To register for either course, please call me at 863-1998 or leave a message with our answering service at 626-3131. When calling the answering service, let them know you're calling about Shar Zahav.

Steven Fritsch Rudser

## membership

To our new members, SHALOM AND WELCOME

Welcome to the family of Sha'ar Zahav. On behalf of the entire congregation, the membership committee is pleased to greet you, the many new members who have recently joined us.

Now that you've joined Sha'ar Zahav you will be making choices concerning what activities you want to participate in and to what extent. Hopefully, some of your choices will entail getting others to join us. We have a particular need for women and men who will be willing to serve on committees, run for office, accept chairpersonships, be instrumental in decision-making, and bring about changes to help us better meet the needs and interests of all of our members. One area for constant attention is to have more women's membership, participation and involvement.

Along these lines we are especially pleased to welcome Laurie Radovsky to the Va'ad in the capacity of chairperson of the Ritual Committee. Laurie will have the full cooperation and support of the Membership Committee in the carrying out of her very important work.

Traditionally, with Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur very near, we anticipate a further high rate of new memberships. We must all put forth special effort to welcome new people. At Rosh Hashana we ask that all members make out a new pledge card for the coming year. We will be mailing membership information and new pledge cards shortly to all people on the mailing list. If you have recently joined Sha'ar Zahav and have made a pledge we ask that you still re-pledge at Rosh Hashana with the understanding that your original will be superseded. Please refer to the Treasurers report in this issue of the FORWARD for more detailed information.

We regretfully accepted the resignation of Steven Levin as co-ordinator of dues and financial affairs. Thank you Steven, for the work you did while on the committee. We are happy to have Ron Lezell join the committee taking over Steven's duties on an interim basis.



# treasurer's report

No doubt many of you are unaware of the existing "Funds" which are maintained separately from our General Operating Funds. These presently consist of the Building Fund, the Prayerbook Fund (to go towards the creation of our new Sidur), and the Harvey Milk Memorial Fund. Unless designated as a contribution to one of these funds, your membership dues and other financial contributions are included in our General Operating Fund and Savings.

\* \* \*

Congratulations to all members who joined the Synagogue on or about Rosh Hashana last year. As of this printing, 75 percent of you have met your dues pledges in full! Hearty thanks are due you from everybody reading this newsletter.

\* \* \*

As most of you know, the membership year for Sha'ar Zahav begins at Rosh Hashana. This is when all members are asked to renew their pledge for the upcoming year, including those of you who joined Sha'ar Zahav after last Rosh Hashana. Of course, for those of you who have been members for less than one year, when you re-pledge, your existing pledge will merge into your new pledge as of Rosh Hashana. Please understand, this inconvenience will occur only once in your hopefully long association with Sha'ar Zahav and is necessary to facilitate accurate recordkeeping.

Bill Goldstein, Chairperson of the membership committee, will be sending a special notice to those of you who have been members for less than one year, requesting your pledge renewal as of Rosh Hashana. Additionally, everyone on the mailing list will receive a membership information package from Bill's committee shortly before Rosh Hashana. Please see the membership article appearing elsewhere in this issue of the FORWARD.

REMINDER: All Contributions to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav (including dues) are deductible from your Federal and State tax returns.

Shalom,

Ron Lezell

Note:

(Note: the following sermon was presented by Mike Zimmerman at Friday night services on Aug. 10. Readers are invited to comment)

The Holiness of Gay and Lesbian Love

One of the themes of tonight's torah portion is that if you follow God's laws, you will get your just reward. For example:

And it shall come to pass, if ye hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Almighty your God, and to serve God with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn and thy wine and thy oil.

The problem with this approach of course is that as gay men and lesbians, we appear to be violating God's laws. In fact, every time, at one of these services, when I put my arm around the man next to me or just after someone up here reading a prayer, I ask myself: is this really happening? Is this event really sponsored by the people who thought it was necessary to physically separate the sexes at prayer, to require women to cover their hair so that men would not be aroused, and to avoid masturbation because it was akin to murder. Yet here we are, experiencing sensuality in this spiritual setting. How do you deal with laws? One poet said:

\* \* \*



mind's a coward; lies are laws laugh,  
and make each no thy yes

Make each no thy yes! Gay spokespersons have addressed this issue. They have explained away the concept of abomination legalistically.

They have said that no Jew keeps all of the 613 rules and we don't either. They say that all Jews have chosen to reject something from tradition and so have we.

I think these arguments are fine for outsiders but just between us insiders, they do not go far enough. We are not simply violating a rule, we are celebrating its violation. We are not simply re-interpreting a rule, we are seeking, God willing, its total repeal. We are in effect saying, as the poet said:

Be thou gay by dark and day  
gay as only truth is gay  
--gracious wanderer, be thou gay.

If we are going to get away with this marvelous audacity, we have to take a strong position. If love is holy, then love in all its forms must be holy. We have the right to allow sensuality to enrich our spiritual lives. Equally important we have the obligation to admit spirituality into our sensual lives. When the gay synagogue becomes a means for integrating sensuality and spirituality in a person's existence, then it becomes a genuine, substantial, even essential part of that person's life. As the poet said:

in a single wish, receive  
all I am and dream and have

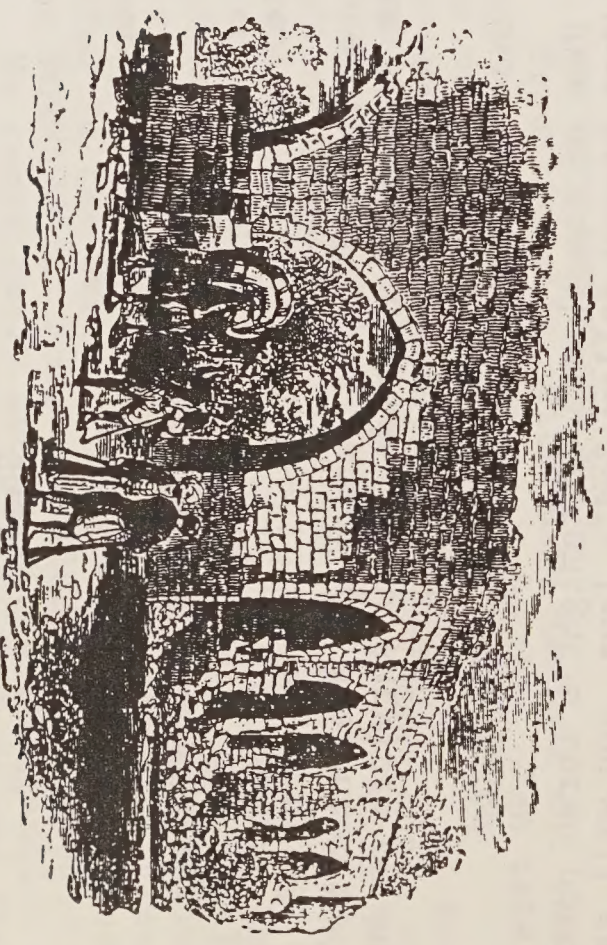
I once heard a Catholic priest talking about these same ideas and he said, "Jesus, I proclaim you as my gay lover." That's very dramatic, but I am not quite ready to say that about the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. Anyway, the poet said it better. This is the whole poem.

mighty guest of merely me  
-traveller from eternity;  
in a single wish, receive  
all I am and dream and have.

Be thou gay by dark and day:  
gay as only truth is gay  
(nothing's false, in earth in air  
in water and in fire, but fear-

mind's a coward; lies are laws)  
laugh, and make each no thy yes:  
love; and give because the why

-gracious wanderer, be thou gay



RUINED AQUEDUCT NEAR JERICHO.



## Anecdote From A Shabbat Service

Ten minutes before services were to begin on August 17, a young Israeli gentleman named Baruch entered the Jewish Community Center and inquired of me whether services would be conducted that evening. Answering in the affirmative, he explained that while downtown that afternoon, he overheard two women (one now living in Israel) and a man speaking French, which Baruch speaks fluently.

Being a very friendly sort, he struck up a conversation with the three, sharing a couple of drinks and other amenities. Their discussion included the issue of homosexuality in the United States, and San Francisco in particular. Baruch later informed me of their negative reaction toward homosexuals and the comment that "...it just is not normal".

Being regular worshipping Jews, the three asked if Baruch would take them to Shabbat services that evening in San Francisco. Not knowing for sure where Friday night services were held, Baruch thought a good place to start would be the J.C.C. to his pleasant surprise, he had to go no further.

Thanks to Sandy Weisman, a regular congregant who is fluent in French, the distinguished looking French people in their 50's were made most welcomed, and took their seats. As the service began, Baruch pointed to "Gay Synagogue" on the Sidur and asked me, "true?" I explained Sha'ar Zahav was synagogue with an outreach to the gay and lesbian Jewish community, which welcomed gays and straights alike. He took solace in the fact that the word "homosexual" does not appear in the service and felt that the French would not understand the significance of the word "gay".

Mysteriously, shortly thereafter the French woman now living in Israel, told Baruch she was "...very tired, but you stay, I'll take a cab", or what Sandy later called and international Kvetch. Baruch took her back to her hotel with the couple remaining to enjoy our service.

Well, a more fervent doveners Sha'ar Zahav has not seen that Mordecai the Frenchmen, who at the conclusion of the amidah, closed his eyes and kissed the Sidur. After the service concluded with our traditional linked-arm singing of Oseh Shalom others able to speak French and wishing to greet our visitors, exchanged shabbat pleasantries.

Laurie Radosky and I felt a disservice to Sha'ar Zahav and to Gay and Lesbian Jews everywhere would be done if the couple left without learning of the common bond which draws us together each Shabbat. As Laurie spoke, one of the few French words I could understand, homosexual, caused Mordecai's eyebrows to rise and his back to straighten. There ensued a lengthy and spirited conversation between Laurie and the couple. Afterwards, the couple were as friendly, personable and comfortable as they had been throughout the evening, and departed with warm wishes for a Shabbat Shalom.

As Sandy walked the couple to the bus stop, the woman said in French, "You know, this has been a little, unusual for us, but I suppose Jews are Jews anywhere".



ELISHA'S FOUNTAIN, NEAR JERICHO.



I am sure many people wonder about my trip to Israel, such as how do I feel about Eretz-Israel now that I have been there.

Going to Israel turned my head around a number of times, but for the most part I felt very at home. The weather was much the same only more muggy. The people are just as pushy as here in the City, only in Tel Aviv, people are more open and honest about it. Rents are just as high and wages, for the less educated, are just as poor as in San Francisco. As for the Gay life, well, I can only speak for the men's lifestyle. It is not as easy and open as San Francisco, but then again, where in the world is it?

I do know that it is not easy being a woman period in Israel. Lesbian or not, women face more problems than men and suffer much more. Then again the feminist movement, like the Gay men and Lesbian movement, is just beginning.

But I myself faced a more difficult problem. In the every day battle between the religious and the secular. Actually in Israel it is very easy, you just pick a side Dati- or Lodati. There is no in between. My problem was where do I fit in. As a Gay man I really couldn't walk around with my Kipah on, besides if I wasn't careful I might do something a Dati (observant) person might not do. Also the secular won't have much to do with a Dati, let alone cruise one. So I stopped wearing my Kipah, which didn't really solve my problem.

Another nice thing about Israel. Only twice did someone look at me and say, "Funny but you don't look...". The two times that it did happen the people were Sabras. The average Sabra couldn't care less. If you said you were Jewish, you're Jewish. They don't want your whole bloodline.

Another very nice thing was in Israel, if someone calls you a stinking Jew it's because you are dirty and smell, not just because you happen to be Jewish.

I was very lucky, I met many, many very nice people, both Gay and Lesbian, also many non-gay people. I enjoyed it all.

Now I have another problem. When, if ever, do I go back? Just to visit or should I make a total Aliyah? In three months or three years? Does a gay person belong in Israel? Does the state need me? Isn't it crazy for a Gay man to leave the total freedom of the City to move anywhere else-let alone Israel? Especially when so many Gay Israeli's are trying to move here!

Well I don't have the answers, but I would be more than willing to sit down and talk this over with people-especially with people who have lived there. That's a hint folks. I hope I got some thoughts going, and I could use some feedback. I have three months to decide.

Tal'or Bar-Shank

## wanted

People interested in arranging or working on social functions such as dances, trips, parties, etc. for our congregation. Please call our answering service at 626-3131 and leave a message or contact any Va'ad member at services.



# outreach

## A Tree Grows in Israel

Last month, the FORWARD published a statement from the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights in Israel describing the recent efforts of the Jewish National Fund to prevent homosexual Jews from planting trees openly in Israel. Part of the pressure against such plantings came from the New York Board of Rabbis and the Agudath Israel of America. Incredibly, a fundamental protestant minister was invited to write an editorial in the New York Jewish press which condemned the dedication of the trees donated by gays and lesbians as a "satanic gathering of sodomites." How can we deal with this narrow-mindedness of our co-religionists?

Saul Alinsky, the great community organizer believed that groups build the power to implement their agendas by establishing reciprocal support relationships with other social organizations. Apparently, the foresighted women and men who created the Sha'ar Zahav bylaws had just this idea in mind. They instructed the Outreach Committee to (1) further relationships with other congregations and organizations in the Jewish community, (2) foster and promote programs that would be beneficial to the congregation and to the community, (3) further relationships with the community at large, and (4) work toward the elimination of social injustice.

One little seedling planted on behalf of these objectives was the decision of the congregation to support the senior outreach program of Jewish Family and Children's Services by "adopting" the Jewish patients in a convalescent hospital which we will visit, at least six times a year. In this illustrious project, we are joining some 40 other bay area Jewish organizations including sisterhoods, BBG's, and the Chabad House, by the way, who publicly opposed the efforts of homosexual Jews to defeat proposition 6. Ironically, such groups may need our support more that we need theirs, because of the several recent episodes of overt anti-semitism against orthodox organizations in the bay area. At any rate, to all groups, say:

Together, let us plant trees.

## oneg

The congregation thanks the following for their sponsorship of Onegs on the listed dates:

- Aug 3 Beauregard, honoring Rabbi Allen Rennett
- Aug 10 Ron Lezell, honoring the visit of his parents
- Aug 17 Lenny Brill, honoring the visit of Hazel Sanjour
- Aug 24 Allen Bennett, in celebration of the Rar-Mitzvah of Steven Fritsch Rudser
- Aug 31 George Lucas, in celebration of Tom Roth-glesser's birthday
- Daniel Chesir, celebrating Daniel and Harold's 10 years together

## program

We are delighted to announce that on Sept 14, we will be joined at services by a group from Parents and Friends of Gays from the San Francisco Bay Area. They have asked us to join them in a lively and friendly discussion after worship services. This is a good opportunity to meet some very special supporters on ours. Please try to join us that evening



## SHA'AR ZAHAV GOES TO WASHINGTON!?!?

Rob Montague, one of our members, plans to be in Washington for the National March for Gay Rights on Sunday, October 14. If any other Sha'ar Zahav members plan to go to Washington for the March, it may be possible to have a Sha'ar Zahav contingent in the March and to take our parade banner to D.C. If you are interested, particularly if you plan to go directly to Washington from San Francisco for the March, please call Rob at 929-0162 evenings or weekends. (Keep trying; he's busy.) Let Rob know before September 21st, in order to make the necessary arrangements.

## SHA'AR ZAHAV GOES TO CONCORD!!!

Wednesday, September 12, a delegation of Sha'ar Zahavniks will journey to darkest Concord to encourage the singing efforts of a nice Jewish girl from Honolulu, occasionally known as the Divine Miss M. In addition to those who bought tickets through the Ad Hoc Performing Arts Committee, many people purchased tickets independently. For those who did so, but would like to know where the S.Z. delegation is sitting, the S.Z. reserved area is in Section AA, near the stage.

Not enough people indicated interest in chartering a bus for the Committee to go ahead with that plan. If you plan to take public transportation, and BART is not on strike, the pavilion advises that you be on a Concord-bound train (if you board in San Francisco) no later than 6:30 p.m. At the Concord Station, obtain an AC Transit transfer from the machine at the exit. There is a shuttle bus to the pavilion that runs every half-hour. Returning to BART after the show, the bus is 25c. If BART is on strike, phone AC Transit for alternate instructions. A number of people plan to drive; you can undoubtedly arrange for a ride by asking around at Friday night services.

Enjoy the show!!!

## birthdays

Sept. 1	Tom Rothgiesser
Sept. 2	Herman Rifkin
Sept. 15	Elliot A. Schneck
Sept. 19	Robert Tat
Sept. 20	Melvyn Kirsch
Sept. 21	Laurie Radovsky
Sept. 22	Mike Zimmerman
Sept. 27	Ralph Vissell
Sept. 29	Jay Johnson
Sept. 30	Robert S. Basker

## yahrzeits

Sept. 5 Lillian Schrager

## donations

If you would like to donate to the Congregation in honor of an event (a new residence, car, etc) or in the memory of someone, such contributions will be graciously accepted by Sha'ar Zahav. Contribution in any amount (\$2.00 minimum) will be most welcome. If you would like your contribution not acknowledged in the FORWARD, please note that on your check.



RABBI ALLEN B. BENNETT

Will be at home to the congregation  
Sha'ar Zahav family on September 23,  
1979, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., 1650 Page  
Street, San Francisco, CA 94117.

## jogging

The Sha'ar Zahav runners will meet:

Sunday, September 16

Sunday, September 30

Sunday, October 14

Meeting time is 10:00AM at the boat house  
at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park. Partici-  
pation has been increasing for each run and  
we hope you too decide to do something good  
for your body. Remember, jogging experience  
is not necessary, and our runs are open to  
all members, non-members, friends and family.  
Call Ron Lezell (552-6766), of Ellis Jacobs  
(552-6976) for directions to Stow Lake.  
See you there.

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